an immediate fillip to these programmes; and

(b) if so, the details of the action taken by the State Governments on the above directions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI G. S. DHILLON): (a) and (b) There is a system for periodical review of progress in implementing the Centrally Sponsored Agricultural Programmes in consultation with the States. During the year 1987, such reviews were undertaken in February, April and July in joint meetings with the States. In the course of the meetings corrective measures were suggested for accelerating the progress. These measures include transfer of improved technology through extension system in the States, supply of quality inputs in time, early release of funds and regular monitoring of the programmes. The State Governments have been accordingly implementing the programmes to reach benefits to farmers and to increase production and productivity.

Modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant through World Bank

*278. SHRI BASUDEV MOHAPATRA:
KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIA:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the World Bank team after visiting Rourkela Steel Plant has indicated to take up modernisation proposal of the said Steel Plant; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to expedite the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Deficiency of Micronutrients due to use of chemical fertilizers

*279. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that continuous use of chemical fertilizers has resulted into deficiency of micronutrients in the agricultural land;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to aid and advise the farmers to check this deficiency;

(c) whether it is a fact that the deficiency of micronutrients has reduced the production of grains; and

(d) if so, what measures have been taken by Government to boost up the production of foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI G. S. DHILLON): (a) It has been observed that intensive cropping through the cultivation of High Yielding Varieties with the use of NPK Chemical fertilisers is likely to lead to heavy removal of micronutrients, which, if not replenished, could result in their deficiency.

(b) The Central Government has distributed free of cost 25 Absorption Spectophoto-meters to various State Soil Testing Laboratories to test the soils for micronutrient deficiency so that the farmers could be advised on use of suitable micronutrient fertilisers. Major micronutrient fertilisers have also been included in Fertiliser Control Order to ensure that quality products are supplied to the farmers.

(c) and (d) There is no report that the foodgrain production in the country has been reduced due to micronutrient deficiency. However, the crop yield could be affected locally on account of micronutrient deficiency which could be rectified by the use of suitable micronutrient fertilisers based on soil test results.